



OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY  
OF NEW YORK

# THE MOUNT SINAI MEDICAL CENTER

ONE GUSTAVE L. LEVY PLACE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10029

Mount Sinai School of Medicine • The Mount Sinai Hospital



*Department of Neoplastic Diseases*

October 1, 1979

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
President, Rockefeller University  
1230 York Avenue  
New York, New York 10021

Dear Josh:

I am writing to you in an unusual and confidential way concerning the Nobel prize in Medicine. I have been contacted in a discreet inquiry by a member of the Nobel Assembly concerning the possibility of an award being made in 1980 or '81 for chemotherapy. In order to make such an award, the Nobel Assembly must have nominations from a select panel of research institutes and universities chosen to nominate the 1980 candidates. The Assembly makes its own decisions after receiving nominations, but clearly cannot even consider the broad field of chemotherapy unless candidates are nominated.

I submitted an assessment of chemotherapeutic candidates upon request in July 1979. This list obviously reflects my own opinions. Others will surely weigh these same individuals or others differently, and make different recommendations.

There is particular desire among the Assembly members with whom I have spoken, to identify clinicians because of the impetus this might give to chemotherapy for cancer as a clinical phenomenon whose time has arrived.

The Nobel prize can be split a maximum of three ways among living individuals. I was told that it is usually awarded for one of three categories of activity: 1) making an original discovery; 2) properly interpreting facts in the public domain to create a new understanding; or 3) for the total content of a professional career with multiple high level contributions of importance and influence on the field.

Apparently any letter from a responsible scientist or physician on the stationery of a designated University is acceptable, since the Assembly is interested in getting nominations rather than restricting them. A letter

of invitation to submit nominations was sent to your University on or about October 1st, probably to the President or the Dean, and if you do not feel disposed to write on your own, you might be able to organize something through appropriate inquiries. The number of nominations by a single correspondent is not limited, and the nominations can be in the form of a name or names, with the description of the background and reasons for awarding the prize, or simply as a name or names. Although the Assembly apparently prefers the more detailed nominations, they do have a staff who can run down the qualifications of nominees.

Certainly there is considerable reason to welcome the Nobel Assembly's positive approach to chemotherapy. I hope you can help them by sparking the appropriate communication from your University. Answers are due in Stockholm by December 1st, 1979, which does not leave much time.

Sincerely,



James F. Holland, M.D.  
Professor and Chairman  
American Cancer Society Professor  
of Clinical Oncology

JFH:sm

P.S. I have enclosed a copy of my letter. The appropriate address for you would be: The Secretary  
Nobel Assembly  
Radiumhemmet  
Karolinska Sjukhuset  
Box 60500  
104 01 Stockholm  
SWEDEN